

For Immediate Release:

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FALL FOLIAGE IN MASSACHUSETTS

State offers many scenic options for foliage lovers this fall

September 14, 2007 (Massachusetts) – Grab a sweater, sneakers and camera, as foliage awaits! Soon Massachusetts' rolling hills and mountains will be splashed with the vibrant colors of fall. Whether you take a scenic drive, bike, or hike, get yourself to one of Massachusetts' mountain summits where views of this year's fall foliage promise to be breathtaking.

"With the recent series of warm sunny days and cool nights, we can expect a spectacular fall season," said Charlie Burnham, Forest Health Supervisor, Massachusetts Department of Conservation (DCR). "Given the recent run of dry weather, it's likely that the colors will begin to change earlier than usual, but the foliage should be the best we've seen in several years."

"Autumn is a spectacular time of year in Massachusetts," added Betsy Wall, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. "We are looking forward to the opportunity to show off our state's natural beauty during the next few months."

MOTT has again partnered with DCR to create the Fall Foliage Hotline (800-227-MASS) where residents and visitors alike can get up-to-date information on the state's most brilliant vistas. Fall foliage enthusiasts are also encouraged to log onto www.massvacation.com for a list of suggested scenic drives and a timetable that approximates where and when the colors are expected to peak. Beginning September 14 through October 31, which is considered the foliage season in the Commonwealth, the website and hotline will be updated twice a week with reports from DCR State Foresters in each region.

Following is a list of recommended mountain summits for viewing fall foliage across Massachusetts.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Mt. Greylock State Reservation

Rockwell Road, Lanesboro, MA 01237 (413) 499-4262

As the highest point in Massachusetts (3,491 feet), Mt. Greylock is considered a premiere fall foliage viewing location. Although the road system is closed for reconstruction to all public access until 2009, the summit is still accessible by hiking trails. For more adventurous foliage viewing, plan on a moderate to strenuous hike (6.6 miles, 4-5 hours round-trip) to the summit via the Cheshire Harbor and Appalachian Trails. Be prepared and dress appropriately, as conditions can be cooler on the summit. Stop by the Visitors Center for more information and a trail map.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/mtGreylock/>

Berry Mountain, Pittsfield State Forest

1041 Cascade St., Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 442-8992

Escape into the quiet splendor of the Taconic Mountain Range, which separates Massachusetts and New York. Accessible by vehicle from April to December, the summit of Berry Mountain offers a striking panorama, and is a great place to view foliage or watch the sun set. Foliage enthusiasts may also opt to hike to the Berry Mountain summit via either the challenging Turner Trail (2 miles, 3-4 hours round-trip) or the more moderate paved Circuit Road (2 miles, 2 hours round-trip). A \$5 day-use fee per vehicle is charged from early May to mid-October.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/pitt.htm>

CONNECTICUT RIVER/PIONEER VALLEY

Mt. Sugarloaf Reservation

Rte. 116, S. Deerfield, MA 01373 (413) 545-5993

Mt. Sugarloaf offers a commanding view of the Connecticut River, the Pioneer Valley, and the Pelham and Berkshire Hills. The summit is accessible by vehicle or by hiking the steeper Pocumpuck Trail (half mile, 40 minutes round-trip). A \$2 fee is charged to park at the summit on weekends and holidays.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/central/msug.htm>

Mt. Holyoke, Joseph A. Skinner State Park

Route 47, Hadley, MA (413) 586-0350

Joseph A. Skinner State Park consists of more than 400 acres of forest on Mount Holyoke at the western end of the Holyoke Range, and offers breathtaking views of the Connecticut River Valley. The summit is accessible by vehicle from April through November, and by hiking trails year-round. The magnificently restored Summit House, a popular mountaintop hotel in the 1800s, is open for tours and programs on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day through Columbus Day. A \$2 parking fee is charged on weekends and holiday.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/skinner/>

Mt. Tom State Reservation

125 Reservation Rd., Rte. 5 Holyoke, MA 01040 (413) 534-1186

Mt. Tom boasts an unparalleled view of the Connecticut Valley to the north and south, the Berkshire Mountains to the west and the Pelham hills to the east. In fact, the iconographic views of the Oxbow of the Connecticut River from Mt. Tom have been famously depicted in the works of landscape artist Thomas Cole. The Reservation includes about 47 of the 80 tree species found naturally in Hampshire County, and is one of the state's premiere spots for hawk viewing. A \$2 fee is charged to park on weekends and holidays.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/central/mtom.htm>

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Wachusett Mountain State Reservation

Mountain Rd., Princeton, MA 01541 (978) 464-2987

Rising above the surrounding forest to a height of 2,006 feet, Mt. Wachusett stands as a unique landmark within the central New England landscape. From the summit, a clear day reveals views of Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire, the Berkshires to the west, and the Boston skyline to the east. Mt. Wachusett summit is also a popular spot for hawk migration viewing in mid-September. The summit is accessible by vehicle, by either the more challenging Bicentennial/Pine Ridge Trails (half mile, 1 hour round-trip) or the moderate Loop Trail (3/4 mile, 40 minutes round-trip). A \$2.00 fee is charged to park at the summit. Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, also located on the reservation, offers fall ski lift rides to the summit for a fee.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/central/wach.htm>

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Blue Hills Reservation

695 Hillside Street, Milton, MA 02186 (617) 698-1802

Rising above the horizon, Great Blue Hill reaches a height of 635 feet, the highest of the 22 hills in the Blue Hills chain. From the rocky summit visitors can see impressive views of the entire metropolitan area and acres of surrounding forested woodlands. More than 125 miles weave through the natural fabric of forest and ponds, hilltops and wetlands. Park visitors may enjoy numerous outdoor activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding and skiing in the largest open space within 35 miles of Boston. Although the summit road is not open to public vehicles, visitors may walk up either the paved road to the Blue Hill Observatory (2 miles round-trip, 1-1.5 hours) or the more laborious Loop Trail (3 miles, 1.5 – 2 hours). No parking fee.

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/blue.htm>

The Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) is the state agency dedicated to promoting Massachusetts as a leisure-travel destination in order to stimulate the Massachusetts economy by generating state and local tax revenues, creating jobs, and supporting the growth of travel-related businesses. MOTT serves as a leader in the tourism industry, bringing together the public and private sectors to promote Massachusetts as a leisure-travel destination. Tourism is recognized as the Commonwealth's third largest industry, generating over \$13.1 billion in travel-related expenditures and \$833.3 million in state and local taxes.

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